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President's Message

The annual December PDC was held at the Columbus Athenaeum on December 4-6. This year's attendance was the highest ever for the conference and the Greater Columbus chapter had its strongest presence ever, in general attendance and event planning. As the chapter becomes more involved I have a greater appreciation of the efforts and extensive planning it takes to orchestrate such an event. This would not be possible without the many, many volunteers who give generously of their time.

I want to thank each and every Greater Columbus chapter volunteer. They are: Shawn McCracken (obtaining/working with PDC speakers, moderator, registration), Ben Novotny (obtaining/working with PDC speakers, moderator), Lori Mikesell (registration, moderator, book sales), Jay Wilkerson (moderator), Heather Drake (moderator), John Yerkey (moderator), Barb Bail (moderator), Shari Parks (registration), Joan Blackwell (registration), Ken George (book and raffle ticket sales, registration), Justin Sponseller (book and raffle ticket sales), Zac Balas (book and raffle ticket sales), Melissa Ludovissie (PDC planning), and Jim Gillenwater (PDC planning, registration, obtaining/working with speakers, book and raffle ticket sales).

I also want to thank the DFAS employees who presented at a breakout session. They are Greg Cliffler, Tammy Johns, Fon Holloway, Arlene Copeland, Jan Glendenning and Brenda Golwin.

The 2006 PDC was a huge success from all aspects. Attendees were given a well-rounded variety of subjects and abundant opportunities to network with other financial management professionals. I believe all who were involved consider the PDC a success. I know I do.

I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season and here's to a bright 2007.

Lori

The Bottom Line

Survey: Young people interested in government work

By Michael Hardy

www.fcw.com

More than one-third of young workers aged 18 to 29 have an interest in working for the government, according to a survey conducted by the Council for Excellence in Government and the Gallup Organization.

The survey polled 2,596 people and found that 34 percent of the Generation Y range said they were interested or extremely interested in working for the government. Another 24 percent responded neutrally. Meanwhile, 30 percent of scientists, engineers, attorneys and other professionals -- called "government go-gets" to reflect their value to public service -- were interested or extremely interested, and 26 percent were neutral.

"The challenge remains in attracting managers to the federal jobs," the council wrote in a report detailing the survey results. Only 17 percent of managers were interested or extremely interested.

The survey also sought to figure out what new federal employees most wanted in their jobs. Growth potential led the field for Generation Y, with 55 percent rating it better than 4.0 on a 5-point scale. "Intellectual stretch" ran a close second at 49 percent. The government go-gets and managers rated compensation and benefits highest -- 51 percent and 53 percent, respectively -- with intellectual stretch finishing second at 47 percent for go-gets and 46 percent for managers.

According to the survey, the most recognizable agencies did not necessarily generate the most interest among respondents. The U.S. Postal Service, Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration were among several agencies that almost all the respondents were familiar with, but few wanted to work for them.

The council plans to hold a series of conferences in 2007 to explore a strategy for using the survey data in recruiting

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Hotel Soaps and Shampoos

ASMC is collecting individual-sized soaps, shampoos, and lotions that hotels give to visitors.

They will donate the items to a food bank where they will be distributed to needy families.

Please bring donations to Roger Neefe in Building 21, office 7A-207.

Educational Items from the IRS

Tax Talk Today is dedicated to providing continuing education and information for tax practitioners. This series of monthly 60-minute webcasts covers current issues of interest to the tax professional community. You can participate live or review the archived programs. Just go to:

<http://www.taxtalktoday.tv/>

The Internal Revenue Service has an electronic mail service designed to provide localized, targeted and immediate information for tax professionals in your geographic area. You can subscribe to a local mailing list using the form provided by clicking on your state. Sign up at:

<http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/content/0,,id=164580,00.html>

Government News

Postal accountability bill will modernize service

By David Hubler
www.fcw.com

One of the final acts of the 109th Congress was to pass the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act, designed to modernize the U.S. Postal Service and make it viable in the 21st century.

The legislation is the first major overhaul of USPS since 1970, and it will help stabilize mail volume and stamp prices, according to a statement from Rep. Tom Davis (R-Va.), outgoing chairman of the House Governmental Reform Committee, who helped broker the bill.

“This landmark legislation solves the structural, legal and financial constraints that have brought the Postal Service to the brink of utter breakdown,” Davis said. “This compromise [legislation] will reverse the ‘death spiral’ at the Postal Service and bring it into the 21st century. It’s a huge win for everyone who uses stamps.”

Davis said the legislation directs USPS to concentrate on what it does best – processing and delivering mail. It alters the way USPS prices its products by allowing it to change prices whenever it needs to, just as commercial businesses do. But the legislation also ensures that price increases are kept below an inflation-based ceiling.

In addition, the bill would give USPS the freedom to introduce new, innovative products or tailor existing ones to meet customers’ needs.

Initially, the Bush administration had insisted that the bill also include a provision requiring USPS to prepay at least \$3 billion a year in retiree health benefits. The service wanted to continue funding the retirees’ health benefits on a yearly basis.

Another major sticking point that prevented earlier passage was resolved when a provision in the current law was repealed that made USPS the only agency in the federal government responsible for paying its employees’ military pension benefits.

Under the new bill, the Treasury Department is obligated to pay those benefits.

Davis, along with Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) and Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Tom Carper (D-Del.), brokered the agreement.

Postmaster General John Potter issued a statement praising the passage of the legislation. “We are grateful that the funding for USPS retiree military service obligations will be borne by the Treasury,” he said. “This, combined with release of the escrow funds, will be used for retiree health benefits.”

Another provision of the legislation is intended to correct the service’s pension formula, which was leading to significant overpayments and contributing to higher rates.

These provisions will free up billions of dollars, enabling USPS to begin paying down its debts, Davis said.

CGFM Profile

Second Career Prompts Dave Swindell to Find 'Right' Certification

By Christina Camara

Like many career military officers, Dave Swindell needed to make a big transition after his retirement. Unlike many of his peers, he did not shift to consulting work, contracting for the Department of Defense or maintaining close ties to his Army past.

He made a big break, moving to an area with no military presence and taking on something completely new: a job in local government.

"When you change careers, everything's open. I considered the private sector, but in the end I was fairly pleased with the ethics and purpose of government. I don't know if I could work that hard to make someone else money."

Swindell ended his 22-year military career, and moved from Oklahoma to Pocatello, Idaho, where he has served as the city's chief financial officer for the past five years. One of his first priorities was to become certified, and the CGFM turned out to be the broad-based governmental accounting certification that he was looking for.

"I was influenced by others who were active in AGA," Swindell said. "Pocatello is home to Idaho State University and Kitty Pumphrey. Kitty is the Professor of Governmental Accounting and an active AGA pusher-and on my selection committee, I later found out. She got me thinking about the CGFM."

Swindell said that as a federal employee, he became well schooled in financial and policy analysis. He also earned a master's degree in public administration along the way. In the Army, his focus was on setting budget priorities, not the specifics of governmental accounting.

By contrast, one of Swindell's first hires - CPA Joyce Stroschein - was stronger in accounting techniques and not as experienced in financial analysis. He purchased the self-study guides and got to work. After he passed the first exam, Stroschein also started studying, and ended up earning her certification before her boss did.

"We really studied on our own, but we encouraged

each other. I couldn't help but finish," he said. "There was a little honor involved." In addition to her CGFM, Stroschein received a promotion from senior accountant to controller. "She also found the program to be a good refresher of just how everything is connected between accounting, management, leadership and accountability to the public," Swindell said.

Earning the CGFM from Pocatello was somewhat complicated. To take the exams, Swindell traveled to Ogden (130 miles), Salt Lake City (177 miles) and Boise (240 miles), with his wife in the passenger seat quizzing him on the way to the testing centers. Being an AGA member isn't simple either, as the Idaho Centennial Chapter meets in Boise, on the other end of the state. Swindell and Stroschein attend AGA's regional conferences and as many chapter functions as time and distance allow.

Taking a job in local government has been a great experience and a huge growth opportunity, Swindell said. Since entering West Point at age 18, his life had been wrapped up in the Army, a life he understood and knew well. He was comfortable walking the halls of Congress or the Pentagon, but nowhere is the role of government in people's lives more obvious than in City Hall. Approving a setback for a garage may sound mundane, but it's pretty important to the resident involved. At the federal level, the direct impact of what you do can be somewhat lost, he said. "Everything a city does is generally important," he said. "I found the right niche for me."

The values he learned through his military education-becoming a well-rounded person with awareness of many disciplines-applied to the CGFM. As a big believer in what he calls a "core education," the CGFM fit into his desire to understand the big picture. Studying for the CGFM Exams gave Swindell a stronger knowledge of the theoretical underpinnings of governmental accounting, describing the origin of certain rules and how they evolved to the point where they are today.

"I think the CGFM distinguishes you amongst your peers," he said. "I can testify to the value of it."

TECHTALK

Trace Systems to seek DOD, DHS wireless network sales

By David Hubler

www.fcw.com

Otto Hoernig, who sold SpaceLink International to Engineered Support Systems in 2005 for \$150.5 million, is positioning a new company, Trace Systems, to aggressively sell its integrated wireless sensor network systems to the Defense and Homeland Security departments and the intelligence community.

The company was formally incorporated earlier this year.

“With the recent advances in sensor technologies, the convergence of sensors with technologies such as [radio frequency identification] and [the Global Positioning System], as well as the tools to manage and fuse data from these sources with geospatial information, we saw an opportunity to respond to the growing demand for comprehensive situational awareness solutions,” said Hoernig, president and chief executive officer of Trace, in a statement released today.

“These solutions can be used to secure borders, airports, seaports, monuments or other government facilities, as well as to protect our warfighters,

identify and track assets or people, or [they can] used in Automatic Identification Technology and other programs to identify friendly forces and assets in transit, on the ground, at sea, in the air or on the battlefield,” he said.

Trace’s systems meet government requirements for end-to-end mobile, fixed and tactical communications solutions. The McLean, Va.-based company is developing systems that can operate on their own or in closed-loop environments and in the Net-Centric Global Information Grid service-oriented architecture/Web services environment, the company said.

Trace has worked with DOD, DHS and intelligence clients in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq, Hoernig said.

“We have a deep understanding of government communications requirements, we know the wireless technologies well, we’re vendor neutral and we’re stepping in to fill the significant need for qualified system integrators that can provide comprehensive full life cycle support,” he said.

But I Digress...

This year has been spent in reflection and transition. As is the custom with accumulating age, time no longer stands still, but accelerates. Seasons come and go, as swiftly as the ideas I have tried to promote over the past year.

I still think that you need to be cognizant of how you treat those around you, while doing what you can, no matter how insignificant, to keep your mind sharp and to improve yourself; your professional self as well as your personal self.

There is no better time to take stock of what you have accomplished, note where you could have been better and make plans to be even better ‘next year.’

So, it is with deep caring that I bid you the very best wishes for the holidays; admonish you to make some attainable resolutions to take into the New Year; and my sincere promise to keep you apprised of more rantings, ravings, groushings and challenges for 2007.

But I digress....

Upcoming Events

January Luncheon

January 11, 2006

It is our pleasure to welcome Mr. Jim Fograscher as our guest speaker at the Greater Columbus AGA Chapter's January luncheon. Mr. Fograscher, the principal Facilitator at Effective Meeting Facilitation, will be giving a presentation on "Effective Meetings." The luncheon will be held in the DFAS-CO Conference Center in room C-147 (Buckeye room), but the luncheon menu is still to be determined.

Spring Professional Development Opportunity (PDO)

(Sponsored by AGA and ASMC)

28 March 2007

The AGA Greater Columbus Chapter, in association with the American Society of Military Comptrollers (ASMC) Buckeye Chapter, would like to invite you all to the second joint Sprint Professional Development Opportunity (PDO) to be held at the Riverfront Club at Confluence Park, located at 679 W. Spring St, Columbus, OH on Wednesday, March 28, 2007.

The theme of the conference will be "Maintaining Excellence in a Changing Environment." Since still in the planning stages, potential topics and speakers are still to be determined. More details to follow in the coming month.

Please contact Diana Kaufman (3-0370) or Jim Gillenwater (3-6907) if you would like to volunteer to help.

If you have any questions about events, or if you have special dietary needs, please contact Diana Kaufman at 693-0370, or Jim Gillenwater at 693-6907.

Speaker Bio:

Jim Fograscher, MBA



Jim Fograscher is the sole proprietor of a freelance facilitation business. He offers over eighteen years experience as a facilitator, trainer, speaker and organizational development consultant. He runs meetings for boards of directors, executive teams, operational business units, non-profits, channel partners, and others. He specializes in meetings for process improvement, focus groups, problem solving, large-scale re-engineering, and strategic planning initiatives.

As a speaker, Jim is sought after at national and local conferences and trade association workshops meetings like these. He brings an energetic and practical view of leadership and personal effectiveness topics.

Jim has worked with a broad range of organizations and industries, from fortune 500 companies to small businesses. You might recognize some names on his list of customers including Honda of America, American Electric Power, Avery Dennison, PPG, Whirlpool, Nationwide Insurance, Goodyear, Pepsi. He enjoys helping leadership teams in manufacturing, healthcare, insurance, utilities, and government to achieve more with less waste through effective meetings.

His education includes an Engineering degree from The Ohio State University and an MBA from Franklin University in Columbus.

*Quote of the Month

A good conscience is a continual Christmas.

Benjamin Franklin

US author, diplomat, inventor, physicist, politician, & printer (1706 - 1790)

Technically Speaking

Government fails 10th consecutive audit

By Jenny Mandel

www.govexec.com

As anticipated, the federal government flunked its audit for fiscal 2006, with \$797 billion, or 53 percent, of its reported assets and an additional \$790 billion, or 27 percent, of net costs, on the balance sheets of five agencies that could not be fully audited.

This marks the 10th year in a row in which the government's consolidated audit statement received a judgment of "no comment" from auditors. The Defense, State and Homeland Security departments, as well as NASA, received disclaimers on their 2006 audits. The Energy Department, which was only partially auditable due to a disclaimer in 2005, earned a qualified opinion -- a step up from no opinion but still short of a clean bill of health.

The difficulty of valuing complex, one-of-a-kind systems contributed to the problems at those agencies. After new accounting rules for property went into effect in 2003, about \$325.1 billion in military equipment appeared on the books for the first time, according to a Treasury Department analysis.

In fiscal 2006, the government's total reported assets increased \$48.6 billion, to \$1.5 trillion.

As it did last year, the Government Accountability Office cited three major shortcomings: financial management problems at the Defense Department, an inability to account for and to reconcile balances that cross agency lines and an ineffective process for preparing financial statements.

The consolidated report also showed that the Transportation Department and Smithsonian earned qualified opinions on their audits, indicating significant problems.

In a letter reporting the audit results, Comptroller General David M. Walker called for the adoption of another report in the annual arsenal -- a new statement that would provide "a long-term look at the sustainability of current social insurance and other federal programs."


Walker has spent the past 15 months crisscrossing the country in what he has called a "fiscal wake-up tour" to speak about the problems the nation faces with its social insurance programs.

Fiscal 2006 was the first year for which a statement of social insurance, which covers outlays for Social Security, Medicare, railroad retirement and black lung disease benefits, was considered a key financial statement. The statement showed projected outlays for those programs exceeding revenues by about \$39 trillion over the next 75 years, Walker said.

Combined with other long-term projected expenses, he said, the total government exposure was about \$50 trillion at the end of fiscal 2006, up \$4 trillion from the previous year and up \$20 trillion since 2000.

Treasurer's Report

By Justin Sponseller

As of November 30, 2006		
Checking Account		
Beginning Balance		\$ 764.30
Deposits		\$ 4,641.24
Disbursements		\$ 1,629.49
Ending Balance		<u>\$ 3,776.05</u>
Savings Account		
Beginning Balance		\$ 5,397.37
Transfer to Checking		\$ -
Interest Earned		\$ 13.00
Deposits		\$ -
Ending Balance		<u>\$ 5,410.37</u>
Total Balance		<u>\$ 9,186.42</u>
		

AGA's 2006-07 Member-Get-A-Member Campaign

Reach for the Rising Stars and You Could Be a Star in Nashville!

That's right, recruit new members into AGA this program year and you could win a free trip (roundtrip airfare and registration) to AGA's 2007 Professional Development Conference & Exposition in Nashville, Tennessee – June 24-27!

This year we are focusing on recruiting the rising stars – we call them early career and tomorrow's professionals - individuals just starting out in their careers, with less than 3 years of experience. Now is the time to reach out to these 'up and comers' – maybe even think about becoming a mentor!

We invite each AGA member to recruit at least one new member in this year's MGAM. Our goal is to continue the positive net growth in membership that we experienced this past year. And, EVERY member who sponsors new members is eligible for prizes and recognition in the *Reach for the Stars* campaign.

Be sure to have handy an AGA membership application or know the AGA website address (www.agacgfm.org). And don't forget to include your name in the 'sponsor' line on the membership application to receive credit!

Prizes!!

Recruit **1** or more members, receive a *Sponsors Only* lapel pin and get recognized in *Topics* and on the AGA website.

Recruit **2** members and start earning *AGA Dollars*. You'll earn 5 AGA Dollars for each new member that joins. Recruit 2 members, earn 10 AGA Dollars, recruit 4 members, earn 20 AGA Dollars and so on. AGA Dollars are like cash and can be redeemed towards publications, membership dues renewals and national conference registrations.

Recruit **6** members by December 31, 2006 and receive your next year's membership dues renewal **FREE**.

Recruit **10** or more members by March 31, 2007 and get placed into a fishbowl drawing for a **FREE trip** (roundtrip airfare and registration to AGA's 2007 Professional Development Conference in Nashville, Tennessee). Recruit 10 members, get one chance at the drawing, recruit 16 members, get seven chances and so on. The more members recruited, the more chances to win.

Spotlight on Early Career/Tomorrow's Professionals New Members

A \$500 American Express Gift Cheque will be awarded to the AGA member who recruits the most new Early Career members during the MGAM.

Sponsor Achievement Awards and Recognition

Recruiter of the Year (1 winner) – The member who recruits the most new members from May 1, 2006 through April 30, 2007 will receive a complimentary AGA national meeting registration.

Top Sponsor (2 winners) – The next two members who recruit the highest amount of new members from May 1, 2006 through April 30, 2007 will each receive a complimentary AGA national meeting registration.

Chapter Overall Growth (6 winning chapters) – Those six chapters achieving the highest overall growth percentage in their chapter size grouping for the membership year will each win a complimentary AGA national meeting registration. Each chapter president and membership chair will also be presented with an achievement plaque.

How to Participate

Have your recruit join online at the following website: www.agacgfm.org/membership/join/registration.aspx

Have your recruit enter *your name and membership number* on the "Sponsor's Name" line when applying online.

Follow up with those individuals that you asked to join.

Rules/Eligibility

All AGA members in good standing are eligible to participate in the MGAM. The campaign period includes all new members joining AGA from May 1, 2006 through April 30, 2007 – AGA's membership year.

National meeting registration can include the National Leadership Conference, the Professional Development Conference & Exposition, the Internal Control & Fraud Conference and the Performance Management Conference. All federal, state and local laws apply. Void where prohibited.

The compromise version of the bill maintains language included in both the House and Senate versions giving the newly created Postal Regulatory Commission subpoena power, among other tools, to ensure that USPS complies with the law. It also contains new language giving the commission

power to monitor the new rate system and make whatever changes are necessary to ensure that it continues to meet USPS customers' needs. At the same time, the bill would add an inspector general to the commission to monitor the regulator in the use of its expanded powers.
